

HOOVER TELLS OF FOOD SITUATION

Administrator Issues Message on Conservation.

IS GREAT PROBLEM OF WAR

America's Production and Needs of the Allied Nations Set Forth—What We Must Do to Keep Wolf From the Door.

Washington, Aug. 20.—Herbert C. Hoover, United States food administrator, today issued to the American public his statement covering the food situation as it now exists and the necessity of conserving the food resources of the nation to provide for the future during the continuance of the war. The statement follows:

Food is always more or less of a problem in every phase of its production, handling and consumption. It is a problem with every farmer, every transporter and seller, every householder. It is a problem with every town, state and nation. And now, very conspicuously, it is a problem with three great groups of nations, namely, the allies, the central empires and the neutrals; in a word it is a great international problem.

The food problem today of our own nation, therefore has as its most conspicuous phase an international character. A sufficient and regular supply of food for the maintenance of the great field armies of our fighting allies and of their no less great armies of working men and working women in the war industries, and finally for the maintenance of the women and children in the home, is an absolute necessity, second to no other, for the successful prosecution of the war for liberty. In the providing of this food for the great allied food pool, the United States plays a predominant part.

With the present diversion of tens of millions of men from the farms into the fighting and industrial armies, resulting in a marked lessening of food production, and the present necessity of increasing the daily ration of other millions of men turned from sedentary occupations into those of strenuous physical labor, resulting in a marked increase of consumption, this deficiency between the food needs and the food production of the allies becomes greater than ever, with the consequence of a large increase in the food quantities imperatively needed from the United States if the allied armies are to be able to "carry on."

World's Larder Examined.

This is a general statement of a condition which only needs to be elaborated in detail to show just what we have to do. The time has come when this detailed statement can be made. Our harvest and the harvests of Europe can now be forecast. We can also survey our combined stocks of food animals; in other words, the size of that part of the world's larder on which we and the allies can draw for the next twelve months can now be estimated. This estimate shows at once that it contains too little for our own and our allies use unless we all administer the supply with the greatest care and wisdom. The allied peoples are energetically undertaking this administration. It lies now with us to do our part. If we fail, the people of the allies cannot be maintained at war. Their soldiers cannot fight without food. A certain definitely determinable part of that food must come from us. Let us then examine carefully the world's larder as it appears today, or so much of it as is at our disposal.

I propose to review the situation first, as regards the cereals, second, as regards food animals and their products, third, as regards sugar, fourth, as regards vegetables, fifth, as regards fish and sea foods, and, finally, as regards our duty in the matter.

Cereals.

The 1917 harvest is now so far advanced that we may compare it with previous production, and with the demands which are going to be made on it. Table No. 1 is given to show the normal peace sources of the annual supplies of France, Italy, the United Kingdom and Belgium, being an average of the three-year pre-war period.

It will be seen from this table that the normal imports of wheat are 381,000,000 bushels and of other cereals 345,000,000 bushels. The estimate of the 1917 harvest in the allied countries based upon crop reports from these countries, is as follows:

Probable As now Dificiency
commodity duration in production due to war
Wheat ... 220,770,000 150,673,000 166,995,000
Corn ... 94,464,000 125,308,000 26,845,000
Oats ... 37,326,000 57,890,000 23,563,000
Barley ... 93,585,000 125,201,000 31,616,000
Rye ... 47,532,000 78,572,000¹ 26,541,000

Total ... 365,586,000 1,486,446,000 525,662,000

In order to provide normal consumption it would therefore be necessary to import in the next 12 months a total of 577,000,000 bushels of wheat and 674,000,000 bushels of other cereals.

The prospective position of our own and the Canadian harvest is given in table No. 2.

Our crops, especially our corn crop, cannot yet be considered as certain, but if all mature safely, North America will have an apparent surplus of wheat of 208,000,000 bushels and of other cereals of about 950,000,000 bushels.

Demand on Our Crops.

The allies are isolated from those markets, other than Canada and the

TABLE NO. 1.

Commodity.	Production.	Imports from U. S.	Net Imports from Canada.	Imports from other countries.	Consumption.
Wheat	381,000,000	220,770,000	150,673,000	166,995,000	541,456,000
Corn	345,000,000	125,308,000	125,308,000	125,308,000	360,386,000
Oats	345,000,000	57,890,000	57,890,000	57,890,000	105,880,000
Barley	345,000,000	93,585,000	93,585,000	93,585,000	190,570,000
Rye	345,000,000	47,532,000	47,532,000	47,532,000	85,057,000
Total	1,486,446,000	1,486,446,000	125,308,000	125,308,000	2,324,276,000

TABLE NO. 2.

Commodity.	Probable Normal U. S. Consumption.	Average U. S. Consumption.	Probable Canadian Surplus.	Add possible Canadian Surplus.
Wheat	674,000,000	674,000,000	120,000,000	120,000,000
Corn	345,000,000	345,000,000	45,000,000	45,000,000
Oats	345,000,000	345,000,000	45,000,000	45,000,000
Barley	345,000,000	345,000,000	45,000,000	45,000,000
Rye	345,000,000	345,000,000	45,000,000	45,000,000
Total	1,486,446,000	1,486,446,000	125,308,000	125,308,000

United States, on which they were accustomed to rely before the war. The Russian supply cannot be got out. Bulgarian and Roumanian supplies are in the hands of the central empires. The voyage from Australia and India is three times as long and therefore requires three times as many tons of shipping as is required from North Atlantic ports. It is also twice as dangerous because of the longer exposure to submarine attack. There has been a large failure in the South American countries and the new harvest from that quarter will not be available in Europe until next spring. As already said all the allied countries are and have been for some time rigorously administering and economizing their food. In Belgium, the relief commission has been compelled to reduce the consumption of cereals by nearly 50 per cent; this brings the food supply so low that the population are incapable of labor.

From the above tables it will be seen that on normal bases of consumption the total allied wheat import requirements are 577,000,000 bushels against a North American surplus of 208,000,000 bushels—and from our United States supplies we must reserve a certain amount for neutrals from which we receive vital supplies and also an amount to protect our stocks better next year than this last. There is therefore on normal consumption a deficit of over 400,000,000 bushels. In the other cereals used in Europe mostly for animal feed, the import necessities of the allies on normal consumption basis are about 674,000,000 against a North American surplus of 105,000,000. But again a reserve for neutrals and increased "carry over" will absorb all the margin. In any event it means we must multiply our exports of these cereals 20 times. However, upon the basis of our present crop prospects we should be able to supply their requirements in cereals other than wheat.

Wheat Situation Difficult.

The situation in wheat is one of great difficulty and concern, and must be met by an elimination of waste and reduction of consumption on the part of the allied peoples and ourselves, in one word, by an effective administration of the available supply.

The allies are unable to use other cereals alone for bread. They can use them only as added to wheat flour to make the war bread now in universal use in European countries. Except in Italy, whose people normally consume much corn, our allies have few corn mills and cornmeal is not a durable commodity and therefore cannot be shipped in great quantities.

Moreover, for generations they have bought bread from the bakeries; they have no equipment nor do they know how to bake in the household. Every American knows that it is impossible to distribute corn bread from bakeries, and it is therefore necessary for us to furnish our allies with sufficient wheat to enable them to have a wheat basis for the loaf. However, they can use and must use other cereals for mixture in their war bread, and by this substitution and by savings on their part a great deal can be accomplished. On the other hand, a deficit of 400,000,000 bushels can be at least partially overcome if we can increase our exports from 88,000,000 to 220,000,000 or nearly triple. This can be accomplished if we will substitute one pound of other cereals for one pound of wheat flour weekly per person; that is, if we reduce our consumption of wheat flour from five pounds per week to four pounds per week per person. We must lay our foundation in the meantime to increase our herbs.

There is only one immediate solution to the short supply of meat for export pending the increase in our herbs and flocks which will take years. During the course of the war, we can, just as with the cereals, reduce the consumption and eliminate the waste particularly among those classes which can best afford it. In the meantime, in order to protect all of our people, we must carefully control our meat exports in order that the people shall not be denied this prime necessity of life.

Dairy Products.

The world's dairy supplies are decreasing rapidly for two important reasons. First, the dairy cattle of Europe are diminishing, for Europe is being driven to eat its cattle for meat; second, the diversion of labor to war has decreased the fodder supplies and the shortage of shipping has limited the amount of imported fodder and therefore the cattle which can be supported and the productivity of the individual cow have been reduced. Even our own dairy supplies are not keeping pace with our growth of population, for our per capita milk supply has fallen from 90 to 75 gallons annually in the past 15 years. Yet today we must ship increasing amounts of dairy products to our allies.

The dairy supplies of the allies in normal times came to a considerable degree from western Scandinavia, Holland and Switzerland, but under German pressure these supplies are now partly diverted to Germany. The men under arms and the wounded must be supplied with condensed milk in large quantities. The net result of these conditions, despite rigorous reduction of consumption among the adults of the civil population in Europe, is that our allies are still short of large quantities and again the burden of the replacement of this shortage must fall on North America. The growing exports of dairy products from the United States to the allies are shown in the following table:

Three year average.	Year ending June 30, 1913.
Butter 4,671,000 lbs.	18,076,000 lbs.
Cheese 3,750,000 lbs.	44,394,000 lbs.
Cream milk 17,700,000 lbs.	34,500,000 lbs.
Hogs 4,756,000	17,792,000 lbs.
Total 33,086,000	92,356,000 lbs.

The high price of fodder and meat in the United States during the past few months induced by the pressing European demand has set up dangerous currents in this country, especially in those regions dependent upon butter and the sale of milk to municipalities having made it more profitable to sell the cattle for meat than to keep them and produce dairy products. Therefore, the dairy cattle are decreasing

in some sections. The only sections in which dairy products have had a rise in price in appropriate proportion to the increase in most of feeds are those producing condensed milk and cheese.

Our home milk and butter supplies are therefore looked at in a broad way, decreasing while our population is increasing. This deficiency of dairy butter is shown by the increased sales of margarine, which show an increase of several million pounds per month over similar periods in 1913. Dairy butter, however, has qualities which render it vitally necessary for children. Milk has no substitute and is not only intrinsically one of our cheapest animal foods, but is absolutely fundamental to the rearing of the children.

The dairy situation resolves itself into several phases. First, it is to be hoped that the forthcoming abundant harvest together with a proper restriction upon exports of feeding stuffs will result in lower prices of feed and diminish the impetus to sell the cattle for meat. Second, the industry needs encouragement so as to increase the dairy herd and thus our dairy supplies for the sake first of our own people and second of the allies. The people must realize the vital dependence of the well-being of their children, and thus of the nation, upon the encouragement and upbuilding of the industry.

Third, we must save the wastes in milk and butter during the war if we are to provide milk supplies to all. We waste large quantities of our milk value from our lack of national demand for products of skimmed and sour milk.

Meat.

The immediate problem is to furnish increased meat supplies to the allies to maintain them during the war. An important factor contributing to the present situation lies in the disturbance to the world's trade by destruction of shipping resulting in throwing a larger burden on North America, the nearest market. Shipments from the Australasian, South American and from the continental countries into the allied countries have been interfered with. Their contributions must be replaced by increased shipments from North America.

The growth of American meat exports since the war began, most of which have been supplied by allied nations, is revealed by the following figures:

Three-year pre-war average, 403,518,000 pounds.

Year ending June 30, 1913, 1,379,193,000 pounds.

The swine of Europe are rapidly decreasing and the consumption demand induced by the war is much increased, this particularly because bacon, ham and lard are so adaptable for military supplies. Moreover, our allies are isolated from many markets and a large amount from northern neutrals is being diverted to Germany.

While our hogs have increased in number by 3,000,000 animals, the average weight at slaughter is falling and our production is probably only about maintained. The increasing demand upon us since the war began is shown by the following figures of comparative exports:

Three-year pre-war period, 1,035,614,000 pounds.

Year ending June 30, 1913, 1,512,376,000 pounds.

Wool and Leather.

Our national supply of both wool and leather are less than our needs, and we are importing them more and more largely, as shown by the following figures:

Imports of wool (value) for the three-year pre-war period, \$82,457,965; for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1913, \$158,975,271.

Imports of leather (value) for the three-year pre-war period, \$132,171,385; for the year ending June 30, 1913, \$177,880,902.

At the present time the world's demand for these products has increased far above the peace level owing to the extra consumption in supplying the armies. This demand is now again increased by the mobilization of a large American army. In the face of this, not only is the European herd decreasing, but also American sheep have decreased about 3,000,000 since the war began.

By the diversion of millions of men from production to war, by the occupation of land by armies, by the isolation of markets by belligerent lines, and by the destruction of shipping by submarines, not only has the home production of our allies fallen by over 500,000,000 bushels of grain, but they are thrown upon us for a much larger proportion of their normal imports formerly obtained from other markets.

They have reduced consumption at every point, but men in the trenches, men in the ships, and the millions of women placed at physical labor require more food than during peace times, and the incidence of their saving and any shortage which they may suffer, falls first upon women and children.

If this privation becomes too great, their peoples cannot be maintained constant in the war, and we will be left alone to fight the battle of democracy with Germany.

The problem of food conservation is one of many complexities. We cannot, and we do not wish, with our free institutions and our large resources of food, to imitate Europe in its political rationing; but we must voluntarily and intelligently assume the responsibility before us as one in which everyone has a direct and inescapable interest. We must increase our export of foods to the allies, and in the circumstances of our shipping situation, these exports must be of the most concentrated foods. These are wheat, flour, beef, pork and dairy products. We have other foods in great abundance which we can use instead of these commodities, and we can prevent wastes in a thousand directions. We must guard the drainage of exports from the United States, that we retain a proper supply for our own country, and we must adopt such measures as will ameliorate, so far as may be, the price conditions of our less fortunate. We might so drain the supplies from the country to Europe as by the high prices that would follow to force our people to shorten their consumption. This operation of "normal economic forces" would starve that element of the community to whom we owe the most protection. We must try to impose the burden equally upon all.